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Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities

Statement submitted by All Pakistan Women's Association, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2005/100.

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Islamabad Plan of Action

We, the participants of the International Conference on Gender Mainstreaming and the MDGs assembled in Islamabad, Pakistan from 28 to 30 March 2005 agreed and urged the following:

Appreciating the insightful and comprehensive deliberations of all participants of this Conference; the support of the host Ministry of Women Development, Government of Pakistan to the Conference; the tremendous preparatory work for the International Conference since 2003 at the initiative of APWA, UN-NGO-Informal Regional Network (IRENE) National Coordinator of Pakistan, as part of its commitment to strengthen its contribution to the ECOSOC work in implementing the MDGs, and mark the centennial birth anniversary of the All Pakistan Women's Association's (APWA) founder and Patron-in-Chief, Begun Raa'na Liaquat Ali Khan, who unceasingly promoted the empowerment of women and universal cooperation; and the support and sponsorship of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNESCO, in partnership with multi/bilateral donors, including the Asian Development Bank, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Gender Equality Project (The British Council and the Department for International Development), media and the corporate sector,

Taking into account the current threats, challenges and opportunities, and the necessary work needed in order to achieve gender equality and promote comprehensive gender based approaches to the MDGs especially in 2005 as it marks the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations, the +5 Review of the Millennium Development Goals and the Millennium Declaration, and the +10 Review of the Beijing Platform for Action;

Being in full agreement with the above and the recommendations, the participants of the International Conference on Gender Mainstreaming and the Millennium Development Goals, hereby commit ourselves to disseminate and work towards its implementation; and we call upon Governments, NGOs, private sector, Civil Society organizations and other institutions to increase their efforts to achieve by 2015 gender equality and the MDGs to:

1. Fully integrate gender-sensitive perspectives and the rights-based approach in the international and national agendas, in the campaign and global efforts to attain the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, and as a priority when developing strategies, formulating economic, social and political policies and programmes, developing macro-economic fiscal and trade processes, and promote partnerships among key stakeholders.

2. Comply with the principles of good governance, the rule of law and the right to development, and fully support the empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming as one of the means to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

3. Urge Governments of all countries to:

   3.1 Act upon their commitments to achieve gender equality, the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, and to promote the integration of these goals in policies, activities, legislation and development programmes;

   3.2 Strengthen their dialogues, programmes, activities and partnerships related to gender mainstreaming as a means to achieve the centrality of MDG Goal 3: to promote gender equality

and to empower women, for effective implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs by 2015;

3.3 Secure political will, along with mechanisms for implementation such as gender sensitive electoral code and legislation for political parties to enforce reserved quotas for women, and monitoring and follow up to the role of women in parliament, decision-making and action;

3.4 Eliminate gender-based discrimination and empower women to gain equal access to opportunities, formal and informal employment, economic security, legal rights, and political participation including decision-making positions;

3.5 Empowering institutions that empower women through education, financial support and affirmative action policies in education, employment, economy and politics;

3.6 Ensure human rights and legal protection of men and women, including policies to halt violence against women, sexual harassment, exploitation and human trafficking, by formulating or strengthening national legislation, litigation systems and international policies, monitoring systems and sanctions;

3.7 Engage and encourage women to play a significant role in conflict-prevention, peace keeping, and peace-building efforts in countries under stress and in post-conflict regions;

3.8 Eradicate poverty and hunger throughout the world, especially in rural areas and for rural women, through comprehensive strategic policies based on needs/resources assessment and realistic development approach for poverty eradication, sustained economic growth and sustainable development for all;

3.9 Promote integrated rural development programmes that engage local communities, governments and civil society through social programmes, education, vocational training, microfinance and credit, assets and job creation, natural, financial and human resource management and development;

3.10 Facilitate international financial assistance, promote partnership with civil society and support NGOs, grassroots organizations and local initiatives contributing to development and humanitarian efforts;

3.11 Promote locally adapted gender sensitive programmes and facilities to provide equal access to: (i) preventive education on STDs, HIV/AIDS, and other diseases; (ii) basic and reproductive healthcare professionals; (iii) treatments and drugs; (iv) preventive services and supplies;

3.12 Pursue national legislation and social programmes to protect the equal rights and access of ageing and disabled peoples;

3.13 Ensure universal primary education for both girls and boys by funding education programmes, eliminating school fees, training teachers in gender sensitive skills and curricula, and ensuring necessary infrastructure.

4. Urge all stakeholders to:

4.1 Address parental, cultural and traditional concerns about the role of girls and women through social awareness programmes and localized information campaigns in focus areas;

4.2 Promote education and reduce women and girl illiteracy through substantial and adapted programmes to empower women and girls;

4.3 Encourage integrated and holistic approaches and efforts regarding poverty eradication and cross-sector programmes for sustainable development that engage all important stakeholders, including civil society, with efforts at the local, national and international levels;

4.4 Combat disease through comprehensive gender sensitive healthcare services and education;

4.5 Promote partnership initiatives, projects and programmes between Governments, the United Nations, International Donors, Local Authorities, NGOs, Academia, the Private Sector and Civil Society in fulfilling their commitments to the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals and Gender Equality.

5. Urge the International Community to:

5.1 Engage all stakeholders in partnership programmes, including coordinating transborder issues such as the trafficking of human beings, environmental degradation, the proliferation of diseases (such as HIV/AIDS and STDs), conflicts and refugee management and poverty eradication;

5.2 Enhance international funds and financial support for projects, with gender sensitive criteria and financial allocations, and engage international financial institutions and funds to efficiently participate in achieving the MDGs;

5.3 Promote women in leading international positions, including in the United Nations system;

5.4 Promote dialogue, communication and cooperation among different cultures, religions and societies, and promote social integration and solidarity through effective public policies involving civil society, women, underrepresented peoples and minorities, indigenous peoples, youth, ageing and the disabled;

5.5 Strengthen the international monitoring, evaluating, auditing, reporting and follow-up processes for all countries to assess progress and take the necessary measures to achieve the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs with gender equality and gender justice.

At the same time, we, the participants emphasize and call upon all members of the national and international community and vital stakeholders to:

6. Enhance their political will and their financial support to translate commitments into action.

7. Acknowledge the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming as a tool for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.

8. Reaffirm international support for the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Millennium Declaration, recognizing the role of gender equality as fundamental to and mutually reinforcing the development efforts, including the global efforts to achieve and implement the MDGs.

9. Support participatory follow-up, regular monitoring and evaluation at all levels (national, regional and international) of the process and fully contribute to the outcomes of the current +5 Review of the MDGs, the recent +10 Review of progress on implementing the Beijing Platform for Action as well as the Sessions of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

10. Support interested NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC to follow-up the implementation of the Islamabad Plan of Action with other stakeholders. An international meeting held each year at the initiative of a different host country could ensure an effective implementation.

11. Request APWA to submit in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Development, Government of Pakistan, the Islamabad Plan of Action in the format of a statement to the 2005 High-Level Segment of ECOSOC, to be considered in the Ministerial Declaration of the ECOSOC.

We, the participants, therefore, reiterate that we will always bear in mind, dedicate and commit ourselves to our responsibilities, to fully realize, and work towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, using gender mainstreaming as an effective tool for the empowerment of women and for achieving gender justice and equality between women and men.